

The Early Childhood Services Bureau is now offering “BEST BEGINNINGS INFANT TODDLER MINI GRANTS”.



THEY'RE QUICK! THEY'RE EASY! & YOU CAN APPLY AT ANY TIME DURING THE YEAR!

WHAT IS AN INFANT TODDLER MINI GRANT?

- The goal of the Infant Toddler Mini Grant is to improve the quality of care being given to infants and toddlers.
- INFANT TODDLER Mini Grants are for child care providers who are active participants of the Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry and caring for or thinking of caring for infants and toddlers and need funds to:
 - *replace or acquire infant toddler equipment
 - *purchase developmentally appropriate infant toddler toys or supplies
 - *meet regulatory requirements for infants and toddlers, e.g. install sink next to diaper changing area,
 - *hire substitute care, to enable provider/or staff to attend infant toddler training, conferences, etc.
- Family Child Care and Group Child Care can apply for up to \$1,000 and a Center can apply for up to \$1,500.
- The Best Beginnings Infant Toddler Mini Grant is a ONE-TIME REIMBURSEMENT.
- Applications are available from Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies and the Early Childhood Services Bureau.

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO TO QUALIFY?

- To qualify for this grant you must be a Montana licensed or registered child care facility;
- An active participant, at any level, of the Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry. There is an initial \$25 enrollment fee to participate in the registry. Please call 1-800-213-6310 for your enrollment packet.
- Caring or planning to care for infants and toddlers.

WHEN CAN I APPLY?

- Applications for Infant Toddler Mini Grants are accepted in the Early Childhood Services Bureau Office any time during the year. Approximately 25 grants will be awarded every three months. Only one grant per facility will be awarded during the Federal Fiscal year.
- **DEADLINES**

Quarter	Into ECSB no later than 5pm on the 1st working day of:	Quarter	Into ECSB no later than 5pm on the 1st working day of:
1st October 1—December 31	September	3rd April 1—June 30	March
2nd January 1 - March 31	December	4th July 1—September 30	June

- You will be notified of acceptance or denial within 30 days of the closing date of the quarter for which you are applying.

SCORING PROCESS:

- Each Infant Toddler Mini Grant Application is reviewed and scored. (50 points possible)
- The scoring criteria used –
 - ☐ Current Practitioner Registry certificate included – if not, application is incomplete
 - ☐ Past grant recipient - 5 pts are deducted if past recipient
 - ☐ Proposal narrative – 15 pts possible
 - ☐ Proposal meeting needs of infants and toddlers – 15 pts possible
 - ☐ Proposal is developmentally appropriate – 10 pts possible
 - ☐ Other/Back up documentation – 5 pts possible

HELPFUL HINTS:

- Remember pages 1 & 2 of the application must be completed.
- You must, at the time you submit your Mini Grant application, also include a copy of your Practitioner Registry Certificate.
- Be sure to SIGN AND DATE your application.
- Any additional information that you can supply is always helpful, e.g., if you are requesting improvements due to licensing regulations, it is helpful to include a letter or copy of your deficiency notice from QAD.

Send all completed applications to:

**DPHHS-ECSB
Attn: Best Beginnings Mini Grants
PO Box 202925
Helena MT 59620-2925**



Application for Best Beginnings Infant Toddler Mini Grant

NAME _____ PHYSICAL ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

MAILING ADDRESS (if different from physical address): _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____ PHONE NUMBER (406) _____

PS# _____ PV# _____ SOCIAL SECURITY # OR EIN # _____

FACILITY TYPE (Check One): CENTER _____ FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME _____ GROUP CHILD CARE HOME _____ EARLY HEAD START _____

Are you presently caring for infants and toddlers? ☐ YES ☐ NO If yes, # of current slots _____

If no, this must be a proposal to expand services to care for infants and toddlers.

If no, how many infant/toddler slots are you adding? _____

Are you currently receiving a Best Beginnings Provider Grant? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Have you ever received monies from a provider grant, I/T Demo Project, and/or mini grant? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Identify which one(s) _____ Award Date(s) _____

IN ORDER TO APPLY FOR THIS GRANT YOU MUST BE AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT, AT ANY LEVEL, OF THE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PRACTITIONER REGISTRY. TO REQUEST AN ENROLLMENT PACKET, CALL 1-800-213-6310. THERE IS AN INITIAL \$25 ENROLLMENT FEE.

This grant may be used for replacing or acquiring infant toddler equipment, developmentally appropriate toys, supplies, licensing requirements to care for infants and toddlers, substitute care to attend I/T trainings, etc. Please refer to attached tip sheet.

THE BEST BEGINNINGS INFANT TODDLER MINI GRANT IS A ONE-TIME REIMBURSEMENT.

Please complete the following table, providing information about the items that you plan to purchase with grant funds and to which area of the Knowledge Base it relates. Knowledge Base areas are: 1-Health, Safety & Nutrition, 2-Child Growth & Development, 3-Environmental Design, 4-Child Guidance, 5-Family & Community Partnerships, 6-Program Management, 7-Curriculum, 8-Observation & Assessment, and 9-Professionalism.

DESCRIPTION	KNOWLEDGE BASE AREA	#OF ITEMS	VENDOR	COST/ITEM	TOTAL
GRAND TOTAL:					

IN A NARRATIVE FORMAT DESCRIBE YOUR PROPOSAL IN THE SPACE PROVIDED. INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

1. An overview of your proposal.
2. An explanation of how the proposal enhances the provider's ability to meet the needs of Infants and Toddlers and how your requests are developmentally appropriate.
3. Please explain any other relevant information about your proposal and facility that would help to evaluate your proposal (bids, letter from QAD, pictures, etc.)

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal black ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

(Please attach additional pages, if needed)

I agree that this application is for a **ONE-TIME PAYMENT**, and that proposed purchases and activities for this grant application take place during the 12 months AFTER the grant is awarded.

Provider's Signature: _____ Date: _____

GRANT IS: APPROVED ☐ DENIED: ☐

ECSB Signature: _____ Date: _____

TIP SHEET FOR INFANT TODDLER MINI-GRANTS

- A. May I request funding for infant / toddler written and/or curriculum materials?*
- B. How can I know if infant / toddler materials are developmentally appropriate?*
- C. Where can I find guidelines and resources for selecting toys, materials, and outdoor equipment for infants and toddlers?*
- D. What kinds of toys and materials are best for infants and toddlers?*
- E. Can I request funding for computers and computer software?*

A. May I request funding for infant / toddler written and/or curriculum materials?

Yes, as long as the materials are developmentally appropriate. The routines of the day should be considered the “curriculum” for infants and toddlers, so curriculum materials that scale down preschool curricula for infants and toddlers should not be considered. There are many publications available to assist child care providers in supporting the emerging development of children birth to 36 months of age.

B. How can I know if infant / toddler curriculum materials are developmentally appropriate?

Infant / toddler materials that are developmentally appropriate will help you use important kinds of information and knowledge about the infants and toddlers in your program as the foundation for learning activities and day-to-day practice. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) publishes a Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) book, which is updated yearly. This publication includes information relating to appropriate equipment and materials for infants and toddlers and would be an appropriate item to purchase with grant funds.

Three important kinds of information and knowledge include:

- ☐ Knowledge about infant toddler development and their learning
- ☐ Knowledge of individual children
- ☐ Knowledge of the social and cultural contexts in which the children in your program live

The Montana Early Childhood Project’s website: www.montana.edu/ecp has numerous resources on their web site including the Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base Content Areas. This document includes valuable information that will assist in the selection of quality materials and/or equipment for your program.

Developmentally appropriate materials and information are constructed with attention to the following guidelines:

- ☐ Information is socially relevant, engaging, and meaningful to the infants and toddlers.
- ☐ All domains of infant and toddler development are taken into account.
- ☐ Information builds on what the infants and toddlers already know and are able to do.
- ☐ Supporting infant and toddler development builds on the child’s daily routines as ways to build meaningful connections.
- ☐ Materials provide opportunities to support the children’s home culture and language while developing abilities to participate in the shared culture of the program and the community.

Examples of inappropriate materials, information, or curriculum:

- ☐ Preschool expectations of mastery of basic skills are “pushed down” to infants and toddlers.
- ☐ Infants and toddlers are expected to participate in groups.

- ❑ A prescribed curriculum is planned with little attention to individual children's interests, needs and context.
- ❑ The program provides few or no opportunities for children's choices.
- ❑ Infants and toddlers with special needs are isolated in a designated area.

C. Where can I find guidelines/resources for selecting toys, materials, and outdoor equipment for infants and toddlers?

The Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers provides several useful tools for evaluating infant and toddler toys and materials as well as providing guidance on how to support all phases of infant and toddler development. There is additional in depth information on setting up appropriate environments for this age group. The NAEYC – DAP publication has a wealth of information on aspects of selecting developmentally appropriate toys, materials, and equipment for infants and toddlers.

Requests for walkers, infant swings, and playpens will not be funded as they may inhibit or negatively influence infants and toddlers ability to explore and move. Physical restrictions may also interfere with an infants' intellectual development. Walkers, infant swings, and playpens may additionally pose threats to the safety of babies.

Websites that provide assistance in all aspects of infant toddler care are:

- ❑ Zero to Three www.zerotothree.org
- ❑ Early Head Start www.ehsnc.org
- ❑ Parents as Teachers www.patnc.org
- ❑ Johnson and Johnson www.johnsonbaby.com/learning_place
- ❑ Better Baby Care www.betterbabycare.org
- ❑ Gryphon House www.ghbooks.com
- ❑ Redleaf Press www.redleafpress.org

D. What kinds of toys/materials are best for infants and toddlers?

Through toys and play, children learn about their world, themselves, and others. Choosing toys and materials that are safe and appeal to infants and toddlers and foster their learning will make their early years count. Good toys are not necessarily expensive, and infants and toddlers do not need lots of them. The more an infant or toddler can do with a toy, the more likely it is to be educational.

Some toys are better choices for infants and toddlers than others. Questions to consider when selecting toys and materials for young children are: How old is the infant or toddler or at what stage is their development? What interests do they have? What do they like to do? Is it washable? Is it safe? (Toys that are safe for one age may be unsafe or not interesting to a child of another age) Does it capture the infant or toddler's attention? Is it attractive? Can the toys be used in a variety of ways? Is the toy appropriate for their age or stage and abilities? Can the child use it alone or is another person needed? (Children need to have both kinds of toys.) What kind of activities will the toy encourage? Does the toy support or sustain emerging development?

Infants are interested in looking at toys, touching them with their hands and mouth, fitting pieces of things together and making sense of their world. Choose toys for them to look at, feel, chew on, hold, roll, and drop. Infants enjoy the following:

- ❑ Bright-colored toys of many different textures that are washable, non-breakable, and have no sharp edges that might cut or scratch.

- ❑ Toys that are large enough that they cannot be swallowed, with no small, attached pieces (like eyes on a stuffed animal or bells on a shaker) that could be pulled off and swallowed.
- ❑ Toys that can be looked at, touched, grasped, and put into mouths.
- ❑ Crawling and walking infants enjoy push-pull toys, balls, rattles, squeak toys, blocks, crib mobiles, stacking toys and rings, stuffed animals or dolls, nested boxes or cups, books with rhymes, simple picture books, noise-making toys, small toys for throwing, strings of large beads, and music-making toys.

Appropriate toys and materials for toddlers will support their interest in climbing, running, jumping, and doing things with their hands. Toys for this age group should be simple and require little coordination. Toddlers are very interested in playing with others and imitating grown-up activities. They are also interested in exploring roles of all kinds in order to learn about their world. Therefore, boys will sometimes show interest in dolls or want to be the “mommy”. Girls may want trucks or to pretend to be “Superman”. Toddlers enjoy the following:

- ❑ Push-pull toys
- ❑ Pedal toys
- ❑ Truck/cars that are big enough to ride, as well as smaller safe models
- ❑ Wagons
- ❑ Balls and bean bags
- ❑ Climbing structures
- ❑ Books with simple stories
- ❑ Blocks of assorted sizes and shapes
- ❑ Peg boards and puzzles
- ❑ Water play toys
- ❑ Simple dress-up clothes
- ❑ Dolls and stuffed animals

Remember to look at the age suggested on the toy. This information is there to guide the consumer in safety and support of children’s development at different stages.

E. Can I request funding for computers and computer software?

Yes, as long as you describe how the equipment or software will be used to support your program development. Computers may also be used in the day-to-day management of the child care program. This includes activities such as tracking attendance, parent sign-in and out, participating in on-line billing for the Best Beginnings Scholarship program and managing Child and Adult Care Food Program requirements.

Due to current brain research, The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends NO screen time for children under the age of two. This means no television, no computers, etc. TV viewing causes the brain to slow down, producing a constant pattern of low-frequency brainwaves. Use of these items for infant and toddler entertainment purposes will not be funded by these grant funds.